



Questions

Naturalization Test Rollout Stakeholder Meeting

Tuesday, September 2nd @ 10:00 am

111 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Suite 8008

Washington, DC 20529

1. **How will derivative naturalization be treated and will any new tests be retroactive and affect current naturalized citizens? Also, is the new test available for viewing and comment?**

The new naturalization test will apply to all applicants who file their *Application for Naturalization, Form N-400* on or after October 1, 2008. Those who derive citizenship do not file *Form N-400* and are not tested in English and civics. The civics questions and answers and the English vocabulary list for the redesigned (new) test are available to the public at www.uscis.gov/newtest.

2. **USCIS Office of Citizenship study materials seem to be at an advanced National Reporting System (NRS) level, rather than high-beginning. The suggested activities on EL/Civics Online (<http://www.elcivicsonline.org/>) also seem advanced. Does USCIS plan to target the high-beginning level in future publications?**

Content for the redesigned naturalization test is targeted at the high-beginning level and accompanying USCIS study materials will also target this language level. Study materials for the new test include: civics questions and answers (100 items) in English, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Tagalog; Reading and Writing Vocabulary lists, Civics Flash Cards; *Learn About the United States: Quick Civics Lessons*; and English Vocabulary Flash Cards (available in early 2009). The new version of *Learn About the United States: Quick Civics Lessons* was reviewed by a panel of English as a Second Language (ESL) experts and will be distributed to all naturalization applicants at Application Support Centers beginning October 1, 2008. In response to an identified need, the Office of Citizenship plans to develop simple activities, based on *Learn About the United States: Quick Civics Lessons*—to be available online—for lower-level English language learners.

If educators and volunteers believe these USCIS materials are not suitable for the needs of their students, we strongly encourage them to share information on free or low-cost civics-based materials that may be helpful for beginning ESL learners. This can be accomplished through USCIS' free online resource center, *U.S. Civics and Citizenship Online: Resource Center for Instructors*, available at www.uscis.gov/civicsonline. The purpose of *U.S. Civics and Citizenship Online* is to provide a quick and easy path to resources to help instructors prepare students for naturalization and to incorporate civics into ESL instruction. In addition to USCIS materials, users will find a variety of additional resources. As experts in their field of knowledge, adult educators are an invaluable resource in expanding awareness of quality user-tested educational materials. The Office of Citizenship will review suggested additions to *U.S. Civics and Citizenship Online* and post as appropriate.



- 3. Has USCIS issued new policy guidance for the new test to replace the previous guidance issued on September 28, 2006 entitled, *Interim Measures for Testing Naturalization Applicants on English and Civics*? If so, can we receive a copy of the new guidance?**

USCIS has issued internal policy guidance for the new naturalization test. This document is for internal use only.

- 4. Please provide an update on USCIS' plans to translate the new history/civics questions into Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Tagalog. To date, we have seen the Spanish and Chinese translations for the old questions on the USCIS website, but not for the new questions. Can you announce the translations when they are posted and let us know where to find them?**

The civics questions and answers (100 items), including those designated as the 65/20 civics questions and answers (20 items), will be available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Tagalog. The Spanish and Chinese translations will be available online at www.uscis.gov/newtest by September 2, 2008. The Vietnamese and Tagalog translations will be available online at www.uscis.gov/newtest by October 1, 2008.

- 5. If an applicant is identified as needing due consideration on the new test, how will the test be different for them? Will USCIS have separate due consideration test questions? Are adjudicators being trained on due consideration in their training on the new test?**

In the same manner as the current test, USCIS Officers will make a determination on whether to exercise due consideration on a case-by-case basis. Officers can exercise due consideration through the choice of subject matter, the phrasing of questions, and the evaluation of applicant responses as provided by regulation. The choice of subject matter will be drawn from the list of civics questions and answers (100 items) available to the public. Applicants are encouraged to study the full list of questions to prepare for the civics test. Training materials for USCIS Officers on the redesigned test include information on the exercise of due consideration for the civics test.

- 6. USCIS has indicated that it will be developing policy guidance on the application of due consideration during the new test. When will that guidance be available?**

The ability to exercise due consideration is based in regulation. There have been no statutory or regulatory changes as part of the naturalization test redesign process. Therefore, the exercise of due consideration remains unchanged. Training materials provided to USCIS Officers reiterate that the exercise of due consideration is to be made on a case-by-case basis and that Officers may apply due consideration in choosing subject matter, phrasing questions, and evaluating applicant responses.



7. Will all USCIS adjudicators be trained on the new test by October 1, 2008, or will the new test be given only by certain designated adjudicators who have been trained?

All USCIS Officers charged with administering the redesigned naturalization test beginning October 1, 2008 must complete the required training by September 30, 2008. As it may be difficult for some USCIS Offices to schedule and have their staff complete the training by September 30, 2008, field offices may choose which personnel will receive the training. Although internal policy guidance provides flexibility for USCIS Offices to schedule training as they see appropriate, all USCIS employees tasked with administering the naturalization test and their supervisors must complete the required training by December 1, 2008.

8. Since the reading and writing items are linked, and each applicant has three chances to read and three chances to write, what will happen if they fail one of the linked items? For example, if someone reads a question correctly, but fails to write the answer to that question correctly, will they have to read another sentence so they can write the sentence linked to it, or will they just receive a second dictated sentence that is not linked to the reading sentence?

USCIS Officers are encouraged to pair the sentences on the reading and writing test. In some instances, the reading and writing items may not be paired. For example, if an applicant fails to read the first reading item, but is able to read the second item correctly, the USCIS Officer will then begin the writing test by dictating the first writing item to the applicant. Therefore, the first writing item will not be paired with the second reading item.

9. USCIS has indicated that it will hold teleconferences where district personnel (adjudicators and others) will have the opportunity to raise questions and concerns about the new test with USCIS headquarters. Will these teleconferences be scheduled before the October 1, 2008 initial implementation date for the new test?

USCIS will conduct a training session for USCIS Officers on September 3, 2008. The USCIS Office of Field Operations will schedule follow up teleconferences as needed. These teleconferences would occur prior to October 1, 2008.

10. To help naturalization stakeholders understand the impact of the test on our communities, it would be useful to obtain data on applicants' experience with the new exam. Does USCIS intend to publish data on exam pass rates by district on a regular basis?

Stakeholders are reminded that the new naturalization test is mandatory for those who file the *Application for Naturalization, Form N-400* on or after October 1, 2008. Given current processing times, those who fall into this category will most likely be called for their naturalization interview no earlier than February 2009, depending upon the field office. Those applicants who filed their *Form N-400* before October 1, 2008 and are called for their interview on or after October 1, 2008 will have a choice to take either the current or redesigned (new) test. USCIS is developing options for data collection, but cannot be certain how many applicants will choose to take the new test during this transition period, which will impact data and statistical analysis. Following full implementation of the new test, USCIS will be able to accurately determine the pass rate of the new test.



11. Many naturalization stakeholders believe it would be useful for the USCIS Office of Citizenship to produce a video featuring a “mock interview” with applicants? Is it feasible for the Office of Citizenship to produce such a video and disseminate it to stakeholders?

The Office of Citizenship realizes stakeholders’ interest in this type of resource. We are open to the idea and will develop options for an informational resource that will help applicants better understand the interview process.

12. We understand that the USCIS Office of Citizenship is willing to schedule local trainings for community-based organizations and educators if feasible. However, we believe that there are many stakeholders who will not be able to attend or who live in areas far from where the trainings are held. Can the Office of Citizenship make trainings available through webinars? Can the Office of Citizenship make the written materials disseminated at the trainings available to stakeholders?

To reach as many stakeholders as possible, the Office of Citizenship plans to produce a training video for posting on www.uscis.gov, which summarizes the content and requirements for the new naturalization test. This video will be a condensed version of the information presented at Office of Citizenship training conferences and workshops around the country. The Office is certainly willing to utilize available technology in order to maximize the number of educators and volunteers who are able to receive training on civics and citizenship.

13. Does the USCIS Office of Citizenship plan to do any further pass/fail studies on the new test after it is implemented? How does the Office of Citizenship plan to monitor the new test?

USCIS does plan to complete an additional record study following full implementation of the new test. The Office of Citizenship will work with the Office of Field Operations to provide the support necessary to ensure USCIS Officers are equipped to administer the new test according to relevant policies and procedures.